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**USTR CONCLUDES BILATERAL COPYRIGHT AGREEMENT WITH VIETNAM**

U.S. Trade Representative Charlene Barshefsky announced today the conclusion of an Ad referendum bilateral copyright agreement with Vietnam. Ambassador Barshefsky said, "This is a very important agreement, the first trade agreement to be concluded by this Administration with Vietnam. The agreement will provide U.S. copyrighted works the same protection that Vietnamese nationals receive in Vietnam. It is an important first step in establishing intellectual property rights protections for U.S. companies and begins to address key issues necessary for the normalization of trade relations."

The bilateral copyright agreement establishes for the first time a legal framework to protect artistic, musical, cinematic, choreographic, computer software, and other works from copyright infringement in Vietnam. U.S. copyright industries have been increasingly concerned by the growth of copyright piracy in Vietnam. Areas of piracy include the transmission of American movies on state television stations, and the establishment of CD factories in Ho Chi Minh City. The bilateral copyright agreement will provide the basis for protecting U.S. works.

**Background**

The bilateral agreement provides for national treatment of U.S. copyrighted works. It gives right holders exclusive rights to authorize or prohibit the reproduction of a work, public performance of a copyrighted work and the public display of copyrighted works. Furthermore, the agreement provides for full and effective enforcement of copyrights within Vietnam, including civil actions, criminal procedures and penalties, as well as border enforcement.

In 1996, the United States began intensive work on the negotiation of a bilateral trade agreement with Vietnam. The conclusion of such an agreement, and its approval by Congress, would normalize U.S. trade relations with Vietnam and permit most-favored nation (MFN) status. A Presidential waiver of the "Jackson Vanik" emigration requirements is also a precondition for MFN status. In 1996, the United States tabled its proposal for a bilateral trade agreement that would establish equitable and mutually beneficial trade relations between the two countries by addressing such issues as market access for goods and services, intellectual property rights protection, and investment rules.